

APPENDIX B: Council's February 5, 1999, Steller sea lion analysis motion

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

February 5, 1999

As Approved

Sea Lion Analysis Motion

Options for analysis:

- 1) Emergency Action as adopted by the NPFMC 12/98.
- 2) Emergency Action adopted 12/98, modified to meet the "50% principle" in the BSAI by reducing the seasonal apportionments as follows:
 - (a) using an equal proportional reduction across the Inshore, True Mothership, and Catcher-Processor sectors
 - (b) using a constant percentage point reduction across the Inshore, True Mothership, and Catcher-Processor sectors
 - (c) 45/55 (A/B)/(C/D)¹ Split

Sub-options:

- (a) B start dates of February 20, March 1, or March 15
 - (b) 5, 7, or 10 day stand-down periods between seasons
 - (c) revised rollover provisions identified by NMFS
- 3) Emergency Action adopted 12/98 modified to meet the "50% principle" as provided under (2) above, including the sub-options, plus the following:

GOA Specific

- (a) tender trip limits of 136mt and 272 mt.
- (b) seasonal exclusive registration between E/W/C GOA and BSAI
- (c) re-examine Shelikof Strait critical foraging area
- (d) pollock trawl closures not included in 12/98 Emergency Action

BSAI Specific

- (a) Spatial distribution of catch:
 - Option 1: CH and non-CH
 - Option 2: CH and non-CH with non-CH split east/west of 170°
Suboption: Range of +/- 30% of sector percentage
 - Option 3: CH and non-CH, with 10-mile buffer around CH
- (b) C/D Season start dates:
 1. C Season start date: June 1

¹ Terminology for seasons in the Bering Sea has been changed from A1, A2, B, and C seasons to A, B, C, and D seasons.

- a. with differential application by sector keyed to co-op.
 - b. end Aug 15
 - c. end Aug 30
- 2. D Season start dates:
 - a. Sept 1
 - b. Sept 15
- 3. D Season end dates:
 - a. Oct 31
 - b. Nov 30
- 4. Combine C/D season with early start date, and with cap on monthly catch. No month to exceed 20-30% of annual harvest on a sector-by-sector basis.
- (c) Pollock trawl closures not included in 12/98 Emergency Action.
- (d) Analysis of Aleutian closure and long-term management options.
- (e) Rollovers:
 - 1. Repeal restriction that doesn't allow harvest of uncaught CH fish.
 - 2. Rollover restrictions evaluated on a sector-by-sector basis.

General

The Council requests that the analysis should include discussion of the following: Safety issues related to closures; and the following fishery data:

- 1. Review time series of bottom trawl surveys for inter-annual variation.
- 2. Review time series of acoustic surveys for inter-annual variation
- 3. Correlate findings of acoustic and bottom trawl surveys in years when both surveys were conducted to evaluate consistency on distribution.
- 4. Review foreign, JV and DAP harvest patterns with reference to CPUE and total catch compared to survey distribution.
- 5. Review portion of commercial catch taken outside survey area.
- 6. Review areas in CH/CVOA that are not currently being surveyed.
- 7. Review all options with or without real time survey data as a basis for establishing CH/non-CH split.
- 8. Review adaptive management measures leaving Amak, Sarichef or other Bering Sea rookeries open as a control site to evaluate efficacy of haulout/rookery closures.

Continue to evaluate the hypothesis that Steller sea lions are food-limited by the lack of pollock, with particular attention to the alternative hypothesis on the role killer whales have played in their decline as received in public testimony. We encourage the use of local knowledge of indigenous peoples, communities and fishermen.

The Council requests that appropriate staff continue work on the following items in the motion adopted by the Council at the December, 1998 meeting:

- 1. The Council requests that NMFS, in consultation with the Council, the Marine Mammal

Commission, ADF&G, and other relevant management agencies, coordinate an independent scientific review of the biological data, Biological Opinion, and other relevant information relating to factors affecting Steller sea lions and their prey. The purpose of the scientific review is to provide guidance to the Council as it prepares to address the long-term aspects of the Steller sea lion situation through the plan amendment process. The Council requests that the scientific peer review be completed by April 1, 1999.

2. The Council requests that NMFS reconstitute the Steller Sea Lion Recovery Team to address concerns such as those expressed by the SSC to ensure that the Council has an appropriate additional source of advice as the Council prepares for long-term treatment of Steller sea lion issues.
3. The Council requests that NMFS prepare and submit a budget proposal for the FY 2000 budget for a sustained research program to investigate: the efficacy of the emergency actions adopted by the Council; sea lion dietary and foraging patterns; sea lion/fishery interactions; and current trends in sea lion population dynamics.
4. It is the intent of the Council that the NMFS move as quickly as possible to develop National Standards for Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) so that such systems can be required on fishing vessels engaged in the trawl fisheries of the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. Furthermore, it is also Council intent that in developing the National Standards that the NMFS consult with affected states, Councils and other Federal and enforcement agencies with the intent that the U.S. Coast Guard and other regional enforcement agencies have timely and efficient access to VMS data.